IN THE CLAIMS

1.   (cancelled) A Media Gateway proxy logically positioned between a Media Gateway Controller (MGC) and a plurality of Media Gateways comprising:

a frontend for receiving a message from said MGC and parsing said message, said message containing an attribute, sub-command, and a destination address;

a memory, coupled to said frontend, for storing said message and said attributes, each of said attributes corresponding to a selected one of said plurality of Media Gateways, each of said gateways having an address;

middleware, coupled to said frontend, for finding in said memory said address of a said selected Media Gateway using said destination address and said attribute; and

an internal MGC, coupled to said middleware, for receiving the address of said gateway, said subcommand, and said attribute, and forming a plurality of other messages using said sub-command, said address, and said attribute.

2.   (currently amended) A device that logically groups a first and a second Media Gateway, said device comprising:

~~a first~~ receiving means for receiving a MGC message;

memory means for storing said MGC message, said MGC message corresponding to an address of either one of said two Media Gateways;

locating means for locating in said memory means said address of ~~a said of~~ either one of said two Media Gateways;~~,~~ and

a second receiving means for receiving said address of said Media Gateway, and forming a message using said address.

3.   (cancelled) The device of claim 2 further comprising:

a receiving means for receiving said address of said Media Gateway, and forming a message using said address.

4.   (previously presented) The device of claim 2 wherein said message includes a transaction conforming to a media gateway protocol.

5.   (previously presented) The device of claim 4 wherein said protocol is MEGACO.

6.   (previously presented) The device of claim 1 wherein said message comprises a sub-command, an attribute, and a virtual destination address.

7.   (cancelled) A method of operating a Gateway proxy, said method includes the steps of:

grouping at least two standalone gateways into a virtual Gateway;

allowing a Gateway Controller to transmit messages to the virtual Gateway; and

allowing the Gateway Controller to receive messages from the virtual Gateway, thereby allowing the Gateway Controller to view the virtual Gateway as a single Gateway.

8.   (previously presented) A method of transmitting messages, comprising the steps of:

receiving a message, said message including an attribute, sub-command, and a destination address;

storing in memory said message and said attributes, each of said attributes corresponding to a selected one of a plurality of gateways, each of said gateways having an address;

finding in said memory said address of a selected one of said gateways using said destination address and said attribute; and

receiving the address of said gateway, said subcommand, and said attribute and forming a unique message for each of said sub-commands, said addresses, and said attributes.

9.   (previously presented) The method of claim 8 comprising the further steps of:

receiving replies from said plurality of gateways, each of said replies including the transaction completion of selected one of said sub-commands;

determining if said replies include all of said transaction completions; and

transmitting a message when all replies have been received.

10.   (previously presented) The method of claim 9 wherein said messages conform to a Media Gateway protocol.

11.   (previously presented)   The method of claim 10 wherein said protocol is MEGACO.

12.   (previously presented) The method of claim 9 wherein said destination address is the address of a virtual Gateway.

13.   (cancelled) A method of transmitting reply messages from Media Gateways to a Media Gateway Controller, wherein each of said reply messages received is in response to a message containing a sub-command, said method comprising the steps of:

receiving a reply message from a Media Gateway; and

determining whether all replies have been received in response to said messages.

14.   (previously presented) A device for transmitting messages comprising:

a first receiver that receives a message, said message containing an attribute, sub-command, and a destination address;

a memory that stores said message and said attribute, said attribute corresponding to a Media Gateway having an address;

a locator that finds in said memory said address of a said Media Gateway; and

a second receiver that receives the address of said Media Gateway, said subcommand, and said attribute and forms messages.

15.   (previously presented) A network comprising:

a Media Gateway Controller (MGC);

a Media Gateway proxy, said proxy coupled to said MGC and comprising:

a first receiver that receives a message, said message containing an attribute, sub-command, and a destination address;

a memory, coupled to said first receiver, that stores said message and said attributes, each of said attributes corresponding to a selected one of said plurality of Media Gateways, each of said gateways having an address;

a locator, coupled to said memory, that finds in said memory said address of a said selected Media Gateway using said destination address and said attribute; and

a second receiver, coupled to said locator, that receives the address of said gateway, said subcommand, and said attribute and forms messages using said sub-command, said address, and said attribute; and

a plurality of Media Gateways coupled to said Media Gateway proxy.

16.   (cancelled) A Media Gateway proxy comprising:

a first interface to an Media Gateway Controller, said first interface implementing translating commands issued by the Media Gateway Controller and translating these commands into actions on an actual Media Gateway; and

middleware that translates control and management functionalities passed on to it by the first interface and translates these functionalities into appropriate requests to an internal MGC;

wherein the internal MGC issues standard commands to one or more Media Gateways.